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Agents Act as Foreign Buyers; Two Arrested

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Of the Herald Staff

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A truckload of automatic weapons was seized and two men arrested today by U. S. Treasury agents posing as arms buyers for a foreign power.

An incomplete inventory of the seized weapons included 100 Thompson submachine guns, four mortars, a .75 mm. recoilless rifle, a quantity of smaller weapons and plenty of ammunition.

Arrested after a high speed chase were Richard [illegible], 38, of Collinsville, and Donald [illegible], 36, of Fairmont City.

Authorities said Laschli was the same man who in 1961 was a regional leader of an anti-Communist group which called itself the Minutemen. The group used surplus weapons in carrying out guerrilla warfare maneuvers in preparation for a possible Communist invasion.

Reports said the agents of the Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Unit had posed as arms buyers for a foreign power. Cecil M. Wolfe of Elmhurst, chief investigator for the Chicago region, said his undercover agent was of Latin extraction, but refused further comment.

The agents said they paid $17,000 in marked bills for the arms which they first testfired on a vacant lot owned by Arthur Cooper, six miles east of Wapella.

The purchase was completed and the two men were allowed to drive away while radio messages were quickly made to 20 other agents stationed in the area.

[illegible] joined in a chase through back country roads that reached speeds of 75 miles an hour. The pair were seized at an intersection when their car became surrounded by officers.

The two men were taken to Springfield tonight where Asst. U. S. Atty. Lewis Scroggins said they were charged in a federal complaint with possession of unregistered automatic weapons.

Scroggins said Treasury agents also raided Laschli's home in Collinsville and seized submachine guns and a flame-thrower.

The arrests came after agents had worked for two to three months to set up the fake purchase after Laschli contacted a man in Chicago to offer to sell him the arms cache.

That unidentified man, a government informant, told the Treasury agents of the offer. The agents would not elaborate further, and it is not known how Wapella was chosen as the site to transfer the weapons.

Wolfe said the seized weapons allegedly had been scrapped some time ago and that Laschli reportedly had them welded back together before the sale.

The sale came after two agents helped haul the weapons aboard a rented truck in Collinsville today. They then drove to the Wapella farm where the transfer was made.

David Slaton, a Dewitt County deputy sheriff said local police did not aid in the arrest because they were not familiar with identification of the Treasury agents and may have exchanged shots with them if shooting had become necessary.

← "LATIN"

Dallas TIMES HERALD
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Engineers Talk Set

The Petroleum Engineers Club of Dallas will hold [illegible] this month at [illegible] mountain and Geologic [illegible] tations" at the club's weekly [illegible] luncheon in the [illegible] photo [illegible]

"Mr. Lapaid, with Don Jepling and Frank Fish, founded Exploration Surveys, Inc.," according to Howard H. [illegible] Houston, chief [illegible] for Magnolia and publicity man for the club. Exploration Surveys, 5818 Dashiell, has developed the use of the gravity meter and interpretation to a high degree of precision.

"From the initial use of gravity interpretations of Mexia-Talco in 1926, the use of the gravity meter has resulted in the discovery of numerous oil and gas fields. It is unquestionably one of the most [illegible] oil field tools that the industry has today."